

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the pending claims in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The specification has been amended to insert the respective serial numbers of co-pending, commonly assigned US Patent Applications referred to therein, as requested by the Examiner.

Claims 14-22 are withdrawn.

Restriction Requirement

In response to the restriction requirement, Applicant confirms the provisional election with traverse for prosecution of Group I, claims 1-13 and 23. Claims 14-22 are correspondingly withdrawn with the request that they be rejoined with the application on indication of allowance of the claims of Group I subject to corresponding amendments being made to the non-elected claims.

Rejection Under 35 USC § 102(b) over EP 1157825

Claims 1, 2, and 23 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by EP 1157825. According to the Office Action, EP'825 teaches a method for the preparation of a printing plate comprising forming an oleophilic image on a substrate for a printing plate comprising a support having at least one hydrophilic layer on its surface, the oleophilic image being formed by inkjet printing an aqueous solution or aqueous colloidal dispersion of an anionic oleophilising agent on the surface of the support and drying the applied solution or dispersion, such that on drying the area of the surface to which the solution or dispersion was applied becomes lithographic ink-accepting (page 4, paragraph 31 of EP'825), characterised in that the substrate is metallic, polymeric or paper-based support (see page 11, paragraph 55 of EP'825), coated, allegedly, with a hydrophilic layer which comprises a crosslinked cationic polymer (see page 121, paragraph 56 of EP'825). For at least the following reasons, Applicant traverses the rejection.

EP'825 is concerned with a method for the preparation of a lithographic printing plate by application onto a surface of an ink-jet receiver of a fluid comprising an oleophilising agent (see, for example, page 4, lines 21-24). According to EP'825, whilst it envisages embodiments of the invention in which the

support is a flexible support (e.g. paper or plastic) provided with a cross-linked hydrophilic layer, the preferred embodiment is where a support having an anodised aluminium surface is employed (see page 11, line 58). In the less preferred embodiment of EP'825 having a cross-linked hydrophilic binder, the binder may be a hydrophilic (co)polymer of vinyl alcohol, acrylamide, methylol acrylamide, methylol methacrylamide, acrylate acid, methacrylate acid, hydroxyethyl acrylate, hydroxyethyl methacrylate or maleic anhydride/vinylmethylether copolymers (see page 12, lines 12-14). The binder also contains a colloidal inorganic pigment to increase the mechanical strength and porosity of the layer and preferred such pigments are oxides or hydroxides of aluminium, silicon, zirconium or titanium.

Claim 1, from which claims 2, 7, 8 and 10-13 depend, is directed toward a method for the preparation of a printing plate comprising forming an oleophilic image on a substrate for a printing plate comprising a support having at least one hydrophilic layer on its surface, the oleophilic image being formed by ink-jet printing an aqueous solution or aqueous colloidal dispersion of an anionic oleophilising agent on the surface of the support and drying the applied solution or dispersion, such that on drying the area of the surface to which the solution or dispersion was applied becomes lithographic ink-accepting, characterised in that *the hydrophilic layer comprises a cross-linked cationic polymer*. None of the hydrophilic polymers disclosed on page 12, lines 12-14 of EP'825 are cationic polymers. There is no disclosure in EP'825 of the hydrophilic layer of the printing plate substrate having a cross-linked *cationic* polymer.

Accordingly, EP'825 does not disclose the subject matter of claim 1. For at least the above reason, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is in order.

For the same reasons as above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection with respect to claim 23 is also requested.

Rejection Under 35 USC § 103(a) over EP 1157825 in view of US 6277498 (Endo)

Claims 3-6 and 9, which are dependent from claim 1, were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over EP 1157825 in view of US 6277498 (Endo et al.). According to the Office Action, Endo teaches cationic polymers comprising amino groups selected from primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary amino groups, particularly selected from the group consisting of polyalkylene

polyamines and alkylated derivatives thereof, among others. Furthermore, according to the Office Action, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use the cationic resins of Endo with the invention of EP 1157825 in order to provide an enhanced printing surface. For at least the following reasons, Applicant traverses the rejection.

It is submitted that claims 3-6 and 9 are not obvious over EP 1157825 in view of US 6277498 (Endo et al.), by virtue of their dependence on claim 1, which, it is submitted, is patentable over the cited documents.

As set out above, claim 1 is directed toward a method for the preparation of a printing plate comprising forming an oleophilic image on a substrate for a printing plate comprising a support having at least one hydrophilic layer on its surface, the oleophilic image being formed by inkjet printing an aqueous solution or aqueous colloidal dispersion of an anionic oleophilising agent on the surface of the support and drying the applied solution or dispersion, such that on drying the area of the surface to which the solution or dispersion was applied becomes lithographic ink-accepting, characterised in that *the hydrophilic layer comprises a crosslinked cationic polymer*.

While it is stated in EP'825 that a flexible support with a hydrophilic layer on the surface may be used, a support having an anodised aluminium surface is preferred. The Examples in the present application show that a hydrophilic layer comprising cross-linked cationic polymer provides improved properties in a printing plate as compared with an anodised aluminium surface. There is nothing in EP'825 to indicate or suggest to the skilled artisan that a hydrophilic layer comprising cross-linked cationic polymer would provide improved properties over an anodised aluminium surface and the skilled person would not be led by EP'825 to utilize such a cationic polymer in the preparation of a printing plate.

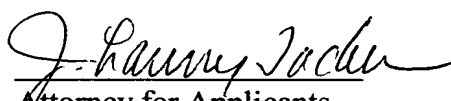
Endo et al. is concerned with standard ink-jet receivers and not with lithographic printing plates. The requirements for each type of system are quite different and one would not expect the outcome of a change in one system to necessarily tally with that of the other. There is no motivation for the skilled person to combine the disclosures of EP'825 and Endo, even if he were to elect not to use the preferred anodised aluminium support of EP'825.

For at least the above reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is in order.

The additional prior art made of record and not relied upon is also concerned with standard ink-jet receivers and is not considered of particular relevance to the claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing remarks, reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested. A prompt and favorable action by the Examiner is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted


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